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THE editor of this Magazine is desirous to obtain authentic memoirs of eminent deceased clergymen, whose lives and writings have contributed to advance the cause of science and religion in this country; and if the friends of such clergymen wish to perpetuate the memory of them, by presenting their portraits to this work, they will be thankfully received and inserted.

BIOGRAPHY.

In the present number of our work, we commence the republication of "A SERIES OF THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES AND FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH." This series will be taken from that admirable periodical publication, the Christian Observer; and we are confident that our readers will consider it among the most interesting articles in our Magazine.

LIFE OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

THE leader of that "noble army of martyrs," who followed Christ even unto death, was St. Stephen. The Sacred History gives us no particulars of his country or kindred. That he was a Jew, appears evident from the whole strain of his apology before the Sanhedrim. (Acts vii.) Some of the ancient writers number him among the seventy disciples. This seems, however, to be little more than conjecture, although his thorough acquaintance with the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and their relation to each other, and the sacred learning and great ability with which he defends the Messiahship of Christ against its most subtle opposers, would seem to favour the opinion, and to indicate that he had enjoyed the advantage of our Saviour's personal instructions. As he united to these acquirements an undaunted boldness and

fervent zeal, and as he also possessed a large measure of that spiritual influence which had been lately shed upon the Church; he was eminently fitted to defend the cause of his Master against his unbelieving countrymen, and to glorify him in the very agonies of death.

The number of the disciples was now greatly multiplied. Many of these were native Jews, born in Judæa, and speaking the language of the country. Others were foreign Jews, born and educated in some country where the Greek language was spoken, and therefore called Grecians or Hellenists. These spake the Greek language, but corrupted by Hebraisms and Jewish idioms, and used no other Bible than the Greek Septuagint Translation.* Jealousies arose between these Grecians and the Hebrews. The Apostles had probably intrusted the ministration of the Church's alms to some persons, who either were in reality partial to the widows of their own nation, or of whom the Grecians, as is natural to men under their circumstances, entertained groundless suspicions; and they were too much occupied in the spiritual concerns of a numerous Church, to pay that attention to the distribution of the common stock among the poor, which was requisite to remove all occasion of mutual jealousies. How soon do we see the fair face of the Church disfigured by contentions! Little ought we to wonder at the enormities of its subsequent history, when we find such strong proofs of human corruption in its members, under the immediate government of the Apostles themselves.

This dissension, however, was of short duration; and, by the prudent care of the Apostles, harmony was completely restored. They called the multitude of the disciples together, and, having represented to them that the distribution of the common stock to the poor was a business of too much labour to consist with their due attention to those more important parts of the apostolic office,

* The above account of the Hellenists is that generally received; but Salmasius (Comm. de Hellen. Qu. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. præcipuè, p. 232.) as quoted by Cave, gives a very different account of them. He says, that no people ever went under this notion and character; that the Jews, wherever dispersed, were not a distinct nation from those who lived in Palestine; that there never was any peculiar and distinct Hellenistic dialect; and that no such dialect is mentioned by any ancient writer; and that the phrase, so far from implying one who spoke a corrupt language, would rather give the idea of one who expressed himself in better Greek than ordinary. He considers them as not of the Jewish race, but Greek or Gentile proselytes, who had first embraced Judaism and afterwards Christianity; and, therefore, as not here opposed to Jews, but to the Hebrews, who were Jews both by religion and descent.

to which they desired to give themselves continually, "prayer and the ministry of the word," (Acts vi. 4.) they directed the disciples to select seven holy and wise men, to whom the care of the poor might be committed. This was the origin of Deacons in the Christian Church, whose peculiar office it was at first to "serve tables," that is, to minister to the necessities of the poor, and to undertake the distribution of the church's funds. And yet had this been their only employment, the Apostles would scarcely have been so particular in their choice of persons, nor have set them apart with such solemnity. Their "serving tables" implied further, their attendance at the Table of the Lord's Supper, and at the Agapæ, or Love Feasts; both being then administered daily, and at the same time. And that their office extended still further, we find in the case of St. Philip, one of these seven Deacons, whom the Sacred History soon after represents as preaching the Gospel and baptizing.

It is on the institution of this new order of officers in the Church, that we first hear of St. Stephen; who, in the enumeration given (Acts vi. 5.) of the seven Deacons presented to the Apostles for their approbation, is distinguished above the rest by his strong attestation, that he was "a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost." The seven Deacons were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas; and, as all these names are Grecian, it is probable that they were chosen from that part of the Church which had complained against the other. The ingenuous and liberal spirit, which appears to have been exercised on this occasion by the Hebrews, served to repress the first rising of dissension, and was made to conduce to the enlargement of the Church. United again in the spirit of Christian charity, "the Word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts vi. 7.)

The Jews tell us, that there were not less than 480 synagogues in Jerusalem, for prayer and the exposition of the law; connected with which were schools or colleges, for the instruction of young persons. Many of these schools were erected at the expense of Jews residing in foreign countries, after whom they were named, and who sent hither their youth to be educated in the knowledge of their law and religion. "Stephen, full of faith and power," having done "great wonders and miracles among the people," and having thereby awakened the malice and opposition of the Jews, five of these synagogues combined together to encounter him; the synagogue of the Libertines, that is, as Cave supposes,

Jews emancipated by the Romans; the synagogue of the Cyrenians, that is, Jews who inhabited Cyrene, a famous city of Lybia; the synagogue of the Alexandrians; that of Cilica, in the Lesser Asia; and that of Asia, that is, that part of Asia Minor which lay near to Ephesus. These all rose up to dispute with Stephen.

The Sacred History is silent concerning the particular subject of disputation; but it informs us that his adversaries "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake:" a remarkable and direct fulfilment of Christ's promise to his disciples, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." (Luke xxi. 15.)

Unable to refute St. Stephen, yet unwilling to yield to the truth, and enraged at the triumph it had obtained, these men no longer ventured to oppose him with open argument, but betook themselves to the basest methods of silencing him. They suborned false witnesses against him, hoping that he might thus fall a sacrifice to their malice, under the same pretexts which had been alleged against his master. "We have heard him speak," said they, "blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." (Acts vi. 11, 14.)

Stephen was now standing as a criminal before the Sanhedrim, charged with having declared, that Jesus of Nazareth should effect the ruin of the Temple and the abolition of the Mosaic institutions.

It may be here observed, that these accusations were grounded upon the very errors which blind the Jewish nation to this day; and Stephen's manner of combating them, is that which seems the most likely of all others to be successful with that infatuated people. A late able writer, states these errors to have been, "That God had promised to them in their father Abraham the possession of the land of Canaan, that is, the enjoyment of this present world; and that they were to serve him with this expectation. This was their first and greatest error; the foundation of all the rest. For from hence it followed, that the kingdom of their Messiah was to be a kingdom of this world: and as Jesus of Nazareth did not effect such a kingdom, but declined it, they concluded he could not be the person; and that God had showed it, by leaving him to be despised, persecuted, and put to a shameful

death. Concerning themselves they thought, that as God had chosen them for his people, they should never fall away, and be separate from him: that their Law and their Temple being intended for perpetuity, would never be abolished: and lastly, that the Church of God and its privileges should not be extended to the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles never would be taken into it."

The speech of St. Stephen before the Sanhedrim, (Acts vii.) is a refutation of all these errors; and his method of arguing, though at first view it may not seem pertinent to his subject, was certainly felt to be so by the Jews, whom it inflamed with implacable rage.

All who sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him before he entered upon his defence, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel; but neither this, which was probably a divine attestation on his behalf, nor the cogency of his reasoning, nor his forcible appeal to their consciences, could save the holy man from their fury: "They were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth." But he, regardless of what was passing around him, "being full of the Holy Ghost," his heart wholly occupied with divine things, "looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God," some bright and sensible appearance of the Supreme Majesty, "and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," clothed in the robes of our glorified nature, and in a posture of readiness to protect and help, to crown and reward, his faithful servant. So easily can God satisfy, and even delight us in the want of all earthly comforts, and even in the extremity of suffering. Divine consolations are often thus nearest to us, when human aid is farthest removed.

He had no sooner made known his vision, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," than the patience of his enemies was exhausted. Blinded by their fury, regardless of the illegality of the procedure, and taking it for a fact, demonstrated by his own declarations that he was a blasphemer, "they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him." (Acts vii. 57, 58.) But how honourable to Christianity is the scene now drawn by the sacred writer! The charity of the dying martyr is as fervent as his faith is firm. He had with severity reproached his adversaries for their malignant resistance of the truth; but when they touch even his own life, he falls before them without an opposing word. In defence of the truth he was valiant; but he yields up himself without a murmur to their cruel rage. The closing words of the historian are

pregnant with weighty instruction: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep;" which is the usual phrase, whereby the New Testament beautifully describes the death of true Christians; and, in the present instance, it strikingly contrasts the tranquillity of the dying martyr, with the fury of his murderers.

"The eloquence of a Cicero," says an admirable Historian of the Church of Christ, "would be mere feebleness on this occasion. All praise is below the excellency of that spirit which shone in the first of martyrs. Let it stand as an example of the genuine temper of martyrdom, of real faith in Christ, and of real charity to men; and let the heroes of the world hide their heads in confusion."

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL DISCUSSIONS.

A DIALOGUE,

PRINCIPALLY ON THE GRATIFICATION OF TASTE.

[*Concluded from page* 476.]

Hermas. You intimated an intention to remark on the influence which these ornaments and amusements have *upon the heart.*

Apelles. My opinion is that an attachment to them proves the heart to be in a measure evil, and has a tendency to make it worse.

Hermas. Does such an attachment discover an improper state of heart?

Apelles. There is this evidence of it; in those seasons when the heart is rectified by the Holy Spirit, and is taken up to commune with God, it rejects and loathes these frivolous toys, these earthly attachments, which waste our time and dissipate our thoughts. It sees the injuries of their deceitful friendship and longs to be dead to them, and out of the reach of their influence. And can attachments be good which the Spirit of God resists and destroys?

Hermas. Under these powerful abstracting views we dread *every* inferior object that is capable of occupying the mind; and must we therefore infer that any attention to secular business is wrong?

Apelles. Attention is one thing, and attachment is another. I confess I dread all worldly *attachments*, whether to business or pleasure. Surely there is some meaning in the precept, "*Love*

not the world, neither the things that are in the world." We must learn the great secret of doing our secular business as a *duty*, and not because the heart delights to linger upon earth: we shall then find it pleasant to perform all our duties in society, even while our spirits are holding high communion with God. But break all earthly attachments, and the charms of this garden are dissolved.

Hermas. Destroy all the tastes of our nature, transform us into different beings, unlike what our first parents were in Eden; and this effect will indeed follow.

Apelles. *Natural taste*, which is capable of being pleased with such a scene when the mind is not otherwise employed, is indeed necessary and harmless; *an attachment* to such a scene, which creates a charm to fascinate the mind, is quite a different thing.

Hermas. But were not all our natural tastes (I mean not those principles which were introduced by the fall) made to be indulged with moderation?

Apelles. Yes, if you mean by moderation, *as far as our hearts can bear the indulgence without being ensnared.* But such is our propensity to form a *disproportionate* attachment to earthly objects, that we have something more to do than to sit at our leisure and dally with them. We have a warfare to support against ourselves. We have to sustain an arduous struggle to proportion our attachments, to raise our affections to God, to overcome a ceaseless propensity to the idolatry of loving the creature more than the creator. This casts business enough upon our hands to furnish us with constant employment. But if instead of a continued effort to oppose these idolatrous tendencies, we give ourselves leisure to play with our natural tastes, and pamper them by indulgence; before we are aware, they will have acquired an undue influence over us, while our spiritual warfare *is neglected.* I fear your attention to these pleasures, Hermas, draws your heart from God, and entices it down to earth.

Hermas. There is too much truth in this; and so far as my attention to them has this effect, I condemn it.

Apelles. It is its *natural tendency.* By applying to your garden for the relief of your gloom, you are prevented from applying to your Saviour. In proportion as your heart is joined to such things, it is necessarily drawn from God. No man can serve two masters.

Hermas. It is not to relieve the distresses of my *soul* that I enter my garden; for that relief I apply to my Saviour; but I enter it rather as an *animal*, to rectify my corporeal spirits, and to scatter glooms which result from the derangement of my nerves. I was so scrupulous that I did not think myself at liberty

to make these improvements with a view to obviate any such uneasiness or depression as arises from mortified pride or any other vicious passion. These I was conscious I ought not to suffer a moment; and I thought I had no right to provide me pleasures to delight a vitiated soul because it would retain its sins. I provided them only with a view to relieve weaknesses of a mere animal kind. But I have since believed that I might use them, as I would any other useful means, to counteract as well the sins as the weaknesses of my nature; but by no means with the single view which governs the world in their amusements, viz. to obtain pleasure: I ought chiefly to have regard to their influence in fitting me for renewed exertion in the service of God and man.

Apelles. All this I heartily approve; my only objection is *that you have gone further than was necessary for these purposes, and further than you could go without exposing your heart to danger.* You say that our first parents attended as much as you have done to outward delights: they might do it with safety, but you have not such a heart. You know, my son, to your sorrow, that your heart is prone to be smitten by every earthly charm, and led by its beckoning smiles into the lap of sinful indulgence. Much emphasis ought to be laid on that prescribed petition, "Lead us not into temptation."

Hermas. Where then will you draw the line? When you have removed the ornaments of my house and garden, will you stop there? Do not your reasonings bear equally against my Mary and her little Ann, and all the comforts of life? There is nothing that the heart loves which it is not capable of perverting to an idolatrous use: but must we therefore abandon all our earthly comforts, and retire to the cells of a hermitage? Must we revive the austerities of monkish superstition? I fear we shall disgust the world unnecessarily, and make it afraid of our religion. And what shall we obtain after all? Shall we rid ourselves of idols by ridding ourselves of comforts? No: the idolatrous heart will cling to the last shred of a tattered garment (if reduced to that) as much as in other circumstances to the most princely array. It is storied of the late lady Huntingdon, that in the fervour of her religious zeal, she was minded to divest herself of every thing ornamental, and take a style of the plainest simplicity. Under this state of mind, she visited a poor collier, whom she found in a miserable cabin which appeared to contain no other furniture than a bench and a single porringer. She concluded that at last she had found a mortal who was bound by no tie to this world. She asked him if he was not very desirous to depart. He

replied, *that* might be if it were not for one thing; but every time he thought of dying he found himself greatly disturbed at the thought of *leaving his porringer*. It was enough for the good lady, and served a better purpose than a thousand arguments against monkery. She saw that a change of style would only produce a change of idols, and returned home convinced that it was no greater crime to *worship a palace than a porringer*.

Apelles. And because a weak ignorant man was attached to such a paltry article, is it to be inferred that lady Huntingdon herself might set her heart as much on that as she did upon all her wealth and splendour? Because poverty cannot cure an idolatrous heart (and this is all the story teaches) is it therefore proved that there is no special danger in overgrown wealth, in the most splendid honours, in the most fascinating amusements? Are we thus to banish all meaning from the words of Christ, "*How hardly* shall they that have *riches* enter into the kingdom of God." And, "How *can* ye believe who receive *honours* one of another?"

Hermas. It is very possible that we may lay too much stress on little things. Mere plainness, it seems, has no tendency to meliorate the heart. If *that* be wrong, no retrenchment of outward ornament will make it right. It will act itself out in some form or other; and if restrained from displaying its selfishness in vain show, it will discover itself in some other way. What is saved by restriction to homely living will be hoarded with the spirit of a miser, to contract still more a little soul. I could name whole communities who with the plainest style are characterized by selfishness and avarice. Facts therefore peremptorily declare that it is in vain to attempt the reformation of the world by making it plain. You and I have known some men whose religion seemed to consist in the coarseness of their dress, and the plainness of their tables, and who evidently seemed more studious to retrench their *expenses* than their *lusts*; to make the world *plain* than *good*. There is a strong propensity in the human heart to commute holiness for something else to which it is less opposed; and every body knows how much easier it is to be a *sloven* than a *saint*. There is danger that in a superstitious attention to trifles, men may drop from their thoughts the essential duties and blessings of religion: *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

Apelles. I am well aware that the heart is not sanctified by the retrenchment either of external ornaments or external sins; yet indulgence in either may nevertheless corrupt the heart still

more. You mistake, however, when you suppose me an advocate for the extreme which you condemn. It is a middle course I am pleading for, and although it is not easy to define that course by particular rules, yet it may be easily found by a heart rescued from the dominion of selfishness and pride, panting after God, and tenderly feeling for destitute men. I allow that some regard must be had to the ideas which the world have formed of decency, and therefore to the station which we hold in society: Our blessed Lord showed some regard to the feelings and prejudices of men. But under this pretence multitudes run to a censurable extreme.

Your feelings and mine are different on this subject: but I know the heart of a youth, and can make allowance for you, Hermas. I have been young, though now I am old. The heyday of my blood is long since past. The heavy storms which have beat upon me have quenched all my fire. The God who took from me the wife of my youth, and the last of ten dear children, [a slight flush passed over his countenance as he uttered this] has so far weaned me from the world, and taught me to feel for the afflicted, that it would now be a violence to my feelings to withhold any thing from the children of misery, to serve any artificial wants of my own. My God daily gives me such a sense of the unspeakable value of the souls of the heathen, and of the distresses of houseless orphans, and unprotected mothers, (who remind me of that dear woman and her children who now sleep in silence together) that I cannot—I dare not for my life, spend one unnecessary shilling upon myself. My house is plain, my garden is plain; I allow myself no costly apparel, food, or equipages; I give nothing to the rich; and when I have collected my little savings, I have more pleasure in bringing them before the Lord, and presenting them to him for the use of his indigent creatures and his church, than the luxurious ever felt in pampering appetite and pride. I want no sweeter amusement. Hermas, do you really think this is wrong? Who is injured by it? Not myself: it affords me the greatest comfort of my life; not my fellow men, for none are defrauded, and some are relieved; not my God, my conscience assures me that he approves. It stands constantly before me as a self-evident truth that it cannot be an unreasonable thing to devote all that I am and have to my Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. I feel that all rightly belongs to him, and may better be used for him than for myself. Can you blame me, Hermas?

Hermas. Blame you! God forbid! No one blames you, but the whole country loudly commends your charity.

Apelles. I thought your opposition to my conduct was intended to condemn it. Reverse then the tables, and should *you* do thus, do you think I could justly blame *you*.

Hermas. I dare not say you could, unless it were an injury to my family.

Apelles. You would have no occasion to sink your capital; and *that*, accompanied with the grace of God, would be inheritance enough for your children. Is it allowed that such conduct would not be wrong? Why then do you oppose it? If right, why contend for the opposite practice? Do you not soberly believe that you might *do more good* by such a course of self-denial and charity?

Hermas. I cannot say I should not.

Apelles. Can he be a good man who does not wish to do all the good in his power?

Hermas. Doubtless not.

Apelles. Do you consider, Hermas, what conclusion you have drawn against yourself? Do you consider what you owe your God and Redeemer? Do you consider (forgive my freedom) that your time is short, that you must soon quit your present possessions and delights, and open your eyes in the eternal world, and stand before the bar of God? [His voice and countenance had an indescribable expression.] *That* will be a solemn hour! A little good done, will then yield more satisfaction than any review of pleasure enjoyed. The rent of one of your farms given to subserve the salvation of the heathen, would then bring you a richer revenue of delight than all this world could have afforded.

Hermas. Apelles, you bear my heart away by your heavenly zeal, but you do not yet convince my reason. When I look directly at your arguments, they seem to be unanswerable; but when I consider what a plain moping world the universal prevalence of your sentiments would make, I am persuaded there must be some latent fallacy in your reasoning, though it is difficult to detect it. Would you then confine all mankind to the necessaries and plainest comforts of life, and bestow the surplusage of each income on whoever should want it? This would go far towards throwing all things into a common stock. And when you have modelled the world thus far to your mind, you will confine *the whole* to a very scanty use of the bounties of providence, as though heaven could afford them no more. But was such a limitation the design of God? When he was creating this luxuriant and well-furnished world, which was intended to display the riches of his infinite goodness, did he make only enough to supply his creatures so sparingly? It was easy for him to bestow his bounty in larger

profusion; and as the earth is said to be *full of the goodness of the Lord*, I believe a large profusion *was* bestowed.

Apelles. God's bounty is indeed plenteously bestowed; and were it industriously improved, and more equally divided, every man on earth might enjoy a rich abundance, and could well afford to refine upon his enjoyments. But property is so unequally distributed by means of avarice and oppression on the one hand, and indolence and waste on the other; and so small a proportion of those, in whose hands it is accumulated, are disposed to charitable distribution, that the few who possess both ability and disposition to relieve the indigent are called in providence to put themselves upon shorter allowance than would be necessary were the whole world as they should be. Were *all men* to adopt my principles, there would be *no necessity for any* to be so economical; the universal prevalence of such principles would not therefore make so plain a world as you suppose.

Hermas. Should men confine themselves to the plainest comforts what would become of the numberless *luxuries* which God has made? Are they to be left to perish where they grow, as though not intended for use? But God created them for the comfort of man.

Apelles. I say not that there is occasion for *all* men to be thus restricted; and the necessity that *any* should be, results from the refusal of the many to do right. If you and I, and as many as we can persuade, should take this economical and charitable course, still there would be mouths enough left to devour the luxuries of the world.

Hermas. A general diffusion of such principles would banish the fine arts from the world with all the elegancies of life, and carry us back to barbarism. Shall religion thus wage war with all the refinements of society? Such a sentiment spread in the church, would give occasion of triumphant boasting to the enemies of christianity. They want only this to give an air of truth to the infamous libel against our holy religion, that it is chargeable with the subversion of ancient literature by the depredations of Goths and Vandals upon the arts of Greece and Rome. To bring this matter to a point, do you verily believe that a world under the power of religion, without the refinements and the fine arts, would be better and happier, and a more glorious spectacle to God and angels, than the *same* world adorned with refinements and arts?

Apelles. I do *not* indeed. I should lament the banishment of the fine arts and *real* refinements, as an injury to the world. I

would not restrain men who have no higher aim, from pursuing these measures for the improvement of society, and enlargement of human comfort. But so much stronger is the taste of men for these pursuits than for the self-denying duties which I propose, that there is much less danger of a neglect of the former than of the latter. There will be people enough to cultivate the fine arts, after we have engaged the attention of as many as we can to these more important objects. Let the fine arts be cultivated; but while thousands are in want of bread, and a world is posting on to judgment unprepared, your aid and mine is more wanted in another quarter. If all men were supplied with the comforts of life and the means of grace, you and I might afford to spend more money on the objects of taste. If all men were good, you and I might spare time from the labour of making them better, to cultivate the fine arts ourselves. You see then these arts would still be cultivated if the whole world should come over to my views. And if in the present state of things, it be necessary for many of the pious to withdraw from these elegant pursuits, it is only because the general neglect of the best interests of the world renders their whole attention to these interests necessary. Nor yet am I in favour of wholly committing these means of improving society into the hands of the enemies of religion. It is to christianity that society must be principally indebted for its improvements of every kind. When christians are called to preside over the interests of literature, they *must* attend to these objects; also when they are employed to initiate our youth in the rudiments of the arts; and I pray God that the instruction of our youth and the interests of literature may never be committed to infidels, that the learning of the world may never be monopolized by those who would employ it against religion.

Hermas. That sentiment is worthy of Apelles. But in regard to the main question before us, *What saith the scripture?* It is easy to entangle ourselves in our own arguments, but it is safer to listen to the word of God. *That* neither requires men to confine themselves to so moderate a use of the comforts of life, for the sake of *charity*, nor to be so occupied with religion as to be *incapable of relishing them.* Allow me to suggest to you the propriety of giving the book of Ecclesiastes another reading. The great object of that book is to assist men in forming a rational estimate of worldly things; and while it discourages a doting attachment to these things, it recommends a free use and cheerful enjoyment of them. There are several passages now in my mind which I will recite. *I know that there is no good in them but*

for a man to rejoice and do good in his life; and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour, for it is his portion. I commended mirth because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry, for that shall abide with him of all his labour, the days of his life. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life.

It is elsewhere said in commendation of an industrious woman, *She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known* by the elegance of his apparel *in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.*

Reflect moreover on the *feasts* which God ordained for his ancient people, and the emphasis laid on temporal enjoyments in the repeated promises of abundance of oil and wine. Consider the rich materials of which the tabernacle was made, the costliness of Aaron's robes, the magnificence of the temple and palaces of Jerusalem, the splendour of Solomon's court; and do any of these prove the existence of such rigid sumptuary laws?

Apelles. Do you consider the *precepts* of Solomon against me? What do they enjoin? a cheerful enjoyment of the bounties of Providence (after the claims of charity are satisfied) *in opposition to a miserly disposition to hoard up wealth, and in opposition to a dark and gloomy temper.* The same do I most heartily recommend. Your other arguments must be answered in a mass. In that infantile age of the world, God dealt with his people as with children, and both in his promises and providences laid greater emphasis on outward enjoyments than he does under the gospel. The church, arrived at more maturity, is now taught to spurn the toys of babyhood, and to raise her thoughts to more exalted things. To accord with the childish conceptions of those early times, as well as to make certain typical representations, that dispensation was accompanied with more glitter and pomp, of which the instances cited by you are proofs. This naturally produced greater respect for ornaments of dress, and all other parts of outward splendour. To these prejudices and views, some of the *writings* of the Old Testament were adapted. They figuratively described the blessings of the gospel dispensation as

consisting in temporal prosperity. They rewarded the industry of a virtuous woman with such external ornaments as were calculated to seize an eastern taste, and to allure others to the same virtue. But as soon as the simplicity of the gospel is introduced, what account have we of the attire of a virtuous woman? *I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.* If you wonder at the toleration of things under the old dispensation, which are condemned under the new, I can give no better reason for it than the one assigned by our Saviour, the Hebrews were thus indulged *because of the hardness of their hearts.* It may however be remarked in addition to this, that the Hebrew nation were a world to themselves. Lest they should be contaminated with the idolatries of the heathen, they were restrained from intercourse with them, and scarcely had connexion enough with other nations to relieve or learn their wants: and they were not then required to institute *missions* to the Gentiles. Also there were few objects of charity among themselves. By means of the blessing of God upon his chosen land, and the regulations respecting the equal division and entailment of inheritances, few of the Hebrews wanted the means of comfortable subsistence. A vast amount of wealth was amassed in the nation, which might be lavished upon outward splendour without disregard to any of the calls of charity. But when the door was opened into the Gentile world, and charity cried for the relief of perishing nations, how was it *then?* Do you see the magnificence of Solomon's court surrounding the Prince of Peace? Do you see his apostles sporting with their natural tastes? No, their souls despised the toy; the cries of a dying world extinguished the cries of nature; they crucified their tastes on the cross of their bleeding Lord; they left their possessions by his tomb; and *with the loss of all things* they passed through the world to search for wandering Gentiles: and millions for this are now blessing them in heaven.

Hermas. [Starting from his seat with a face as red as crimson] Blessed be their memory! and blasted be the man who, in such circumstances, would not do the same! But my dear Apelles, that was a crisis which called for peculiar sacrifices, greater than are demanded of us. Can you show me a *precept* in the *New Testament* which requires the abstemiousness recommended by you?

Apelles. A general unqualified law enjoining such abstemiousness *on all, and at all times*, could not have been looked for. Such a law would have overreached the mark by demanding what never could be necessary. But I can point you to precepts which require

you to give to Christ your houses and lands, to be used for him *as occasion may demand*. I can show you precepts which require you to relieve the wretched, without any other limitation *than their necessities, and your ability*. I can show you the great law of love, which requires you *to do to others as you would that others should do to you*.

At this moment a summons to breakfast interrupted the conversation, and the subject was dismissed.

More than fifteen years have since elapsed, and more than fifteen hundred times have I reviewed a scene which produced impressions that I bless God I hope I shall never lose. I have often weighed the arguments adduced on both sides, without being able to settle an unwavering opinion. I have leaned to Apelles and to Hermas alternately, according to the variations of my own *feelings;* and in the conflict have often wished that I could find some man capable of relieving my doubts. I have shown the dialogue to as many, I believe, as twenty different persons, and have found them to be about equally divided between the two disputants. This I have noticed, that in every instance, they gave the palm to him whose opinions accorded with *their own habits*. But my reason tells me that the truth lies somewhere, independent on habit or feeling, and my conscience bids me not rest till I find it. If any reader of the Assembly's Magazine could settle thoroughly the point in dispute, he might either remove the scruples, or correct the practice of many, and would certainly be entitled to the lasting gratitude of

ONESIMUS.

IMMORTALITY.

Mr. Editor,

It is not my design to call the attention of your readers to arguments in favour of the immortality of the soul. This has been done to the best advantage by many and very able writers; and the doctrine, I believe, is at this day held by the great body of mankind, excepting only a few daring infidels, and the remnant of those French maniacs who, during the period of Robespierean domination, announced by solemn and authoritative decree, the eternal sleep of both soul and body. My design is simply to make a few observations relative to the origin of this doctrine.

Immortality is by some supposed to be an original, and even essential attribute of the human soul, contemporary with its existence, and inseparable from its nature. This they infer from

the immateriality and consequent indissolubility of its substance, and from its natural tendency to, or desire of, continued existence. It is accordingly held, that the soul of man was created an immortal being, having immortality, by an irreversible divine constitution, attached to, or entailed upon its nature in the first instance of its creation; and that, as the desire of it was a natural sentiment with our original progenitor, so the belief of it was a natural opinion, founded in an innate infallible principle.

That the soul of man is a spiritual substance, immaterial, and indissoluble, I do not dispute; nor that it has a kind of natural tendency to, or desire of, continuance in being. But do these premises afford sufficient evidence of its immortality? I have said *sufficient* evidence; because, it is not conjecture, nor plausible presumption that is here required, but moral certainty; certainty resting on the basis of known and well-established truth. The ancient philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Cicero in particular, and others, had the notion of the soul's immortality, but they, from an affectation of superior discernment and knowledge, were unwilling to have it supposed, that they received it by popular tradition, and laboured with indefatigable pains, and with penetration indeed uncommon, to investigate those appearances and principles of nature, which might give them some information on the subject. Yet, after all their researches, they were more perplexed on the subject than any common christian of the smallest intellectual improvement. Had they, however, confined themselves to such data as nature afforded, and reasoned only on natural principles known on good evidence to be true, they would have reasoned throughout much more like philosophers, and have closed their inquiry. But, instead of this, they had recourse to the most fanciful and extravagant suppositions; such as, the imaginary preexistence of human souls; their successive transmigration from body to body; or their being literally particles of the Deity, whom they supposed to be the universal soul of the world. These and similar conjectures are wholly devoid of support; and some of them are entirely opposed to the proper notion of a future state considered as a state of rewards and punishments. And even when they reason from better principles, still they hesitate about the conclusion, and fluctuate in seemingly painful uncertainty between the presumption for it, and the objections against it.

Nor have modern philosophers been more successful in their attempts to investigate the subject with the simple aid which nature may afford them. Allow that the principle of reason and intelligence in us is immaterial and indissoluble; does it therefore

follow, that it must perpetually exist? May not the same Almighty Power which gave it being, with equal ease, put a period to that being? It is doubtless as easy for Omnipotence, by a word to reduce it to its original nonentity, as it was at first to call it out of nothing into existence. Allow too, that it naturally desires the perpetuation of its existence. It is a common and just maxim, that what proves too much, proves nothing. We may as well infer from our natural desire of health, that we shall never be sick; or, from our natural desire of the future felicity of our species, that all mankind will be finally happy.

To these arguments they have added others, supposed to be of equal weight: the first is that arising from the universal consenting opinion of all ages and nations of mankind. But is this position true? Who ever has or can ascertain, the universal opinion of mankind in all nations and ages of the world, on any one point whatever, and especially one which is not a point of obviously marked and certain experience? I have read of nations who have had no notion of existence after this life, and indeed scarcely any conception of a Deity. I cannot vouch for the truth of the representation. But whether it be true or not, it would not, I conceive, consist with good reason so to confide in the assertion of a universal consenting opinion of mankind, as to found on it a belief of the immortality of the soul. And even supposing it to have been from time immemorial a universal opinion, it can have but inconsiderable influence in establishing such belief, whilst its original source is not known, and the principles and appearances on which it is founded are not investigated, and their validity established.

The second argument is that arising from the operation of conscience, which seems to point to a future tribunal, and a consequent state of reward and punishment. In this argument, at first view, there is a degree of plausibility. But it is not clear that conscience, without previous information or suggestion from some other quarter, would have ever referred to the probability of such a tribunal. Under this view, the argument is to be considered in the light of what by logicians is called a petitio principii, or a begging of the question. Besides, there have been men in all ages, and even sects of philosophers, as the Epicureans in Greece and Rome, and the Sadducees among the Jews, who confined all retributive reference to the present state, and taught their followers to expect no other consequence from their evil deeds, than such as might arise in the course of the present life. With them and their followers, therefore, conscience would not give any premonitions of what might take place in a future state.

The third argument is that arising from the apparently unequalled distribution of rewards and punishments in this life. This argument also is plausible. For whatever may be said of a balance of the account, in the good man's favour, resulting from the peace, and various satisfactions of his mind, it is a balance nevertheless not so ostensible, as, in the eye of the world, to vindicate the wisdom and righteousness of the sovereign Disposer of all things. At best, however, it does not afford evidence of a future state of interminable existence. It does not preclude the suggestion that some limited future duration, either of the next, or of some succeeding state, may be sufficient for the accomplishment of all the retributory purposes of the righteous government of God.

The truth, I conceive, is; that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a doctrine of direct and particular revelation from God; and that this is the only ground on which we can rest a full and satisfactory persuasion of its truth. I conceive also, that this revelation was given at a very early period of the world, though not prior to the defection of our nature in our original progenitor; that it is a proper doctrine of christianity; that it is connected with this system, and that the benefit originates in the grace, and is procured for us by the work of redemption. It is in the gospel, as the apostle informs us, 2 Tim. i. 10, that "Life and immortality are brought to light." In the history which Moses has given of the state of man in Paradise, and of that dispensation under which he was placed, we have no intimation of it. We are there told indeed, that, though without moral impurity, he was not absolutely impeccable, and that he was subjected to a certain positive prohibitory law, on his violation of which he was expressly assured, that *he should die;* that is, that he should be subjected to, and actually suffer the pains of death, or whatever is inseparably imported in the death of the body; and that he should be separated from God and communion with him, who was his spiritual life. But do we hence learn, that, in case he punctually observed the aforesaid prohibition, he should live forever? I think not. With the intelligence he may be supposed to have possessed, I conceive, he would not have presumed to put such construction on the law by which he was bound, and of the sanction of which he doubtless had adequate knowledge. Such a conclusion would not have been reasonable, unless an express promise of immortality having been previously made him. But of such promise, the inspired historian has given us no account. Our parent in Paradise was not only bound, but had sufficient ability, and sufficient en-

couragement, to fulfil every law he was under, independently of the benefit in question; and the most perfect obedience would not have entitled him to it. His obedience, perfect as it was, before the fall, could not have had any abounding efficiency or merit attached to it. By the law of nature, his virtues, being perfect, must have had their present perfect reward; but they could not, agreeably to that law, have abounded beyond their present effect; and his Maker might, in perfect justice, at any time, have withheld that protection by which he was every moment supported in existence. For him it was enough, in reason, equity, and righteousness, that he was perfectly happy during the perfection of his rectitude and the protraction of his being. The termination of his being, and that with circumstances and sensations highly afflictive, he, no doubt, every moment expected in consequence of his transgression.

But here, instead of the accomplishment of all that foreboded calamity, he is surprised with a declaration of mercy, from the mouth of that Being whom he had so heinously offended. A christian revelation announced a new order of things; a christian dispensation is established. It was introduced with that comprehensive figurative promise, Gen. iii. 15, "I will put enmity between thee" (meaning the serpent or Satan who beguiled her) "and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." What explanatory informations may have accompanied, or at different times, succeeded this consolatory, though obscure declaration, we cannot particularly say. It appears, however, that the woman had hopes, and those well-grounded, that a personage born of her, or of some one of her female descendants, would be instrumental in procuring some great felicity to her and her whole posterity. It also appears, that our lapsed parents were then comforted with the hope, that though they should die, they nevertheless should not suffer the total extinction of being; but that, through the grace of the promised redemption, they should possess a never-ending existence. From this revelation, and from no other source, has originated the notion, which has prevailed from that time through succeeding generations, that the continuance of their being is beyond the present life. This revelation was most probably given, if not before, yet soon after the affliction our first parents suffered from the cruel and untimely fate of a beloved son by the hand of an abandoned brother. On that occasion, with the specimen then given of a seeming inequality of the providence of God, they must have stood much in need of the consoling pros-

pect of an equitable and compensative arrangement in a future state of existence.

It is scarcely supposable, that this doctrine would have passed in uninterrupted tradition, as it did, to the several succeeding ages of the world, if it had not been originally given by an express revelation from God; for, as has been said, there were no appearances or principles of nature, which could have given rise to, or could have supported the opinion. Nevertheless, the notion did prevail, especially in the eastern quarter of the world, and it seems to have gained additional diffusion by means of the imposture of Zoroaster, the celebrated opposer of the Sabian idolatry, and pretended reformer of the Magian religion. This Zoroaster, according to Dean Prideaux, was a Jew, a servant of the prophet Daniel at Babylon. He appears to have been acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and particularly with the doctrines of immortality and the resurrection. He accordingly with great art and ingenuity introduced them into, and interwove them with his system. The famous Pythagoras of Greece, as history informs us, was a disciple of his at Babylon; and from him, no doubt, obtained the same doctrines, and particularly that of the immortality. Accordingly, on his return to Greece, he there taught it; but not with that purity in which he received it from his master. For, being ambitious of becoming also the founder of a system of religion, he corrupted it with a mixture of Indian philosophy, which he had also learned in the east. In short, he made this immortality to consist in an eternal transmigration of the soul from one body to another; whereas the doctrine of Zoroaster was, that there was to be a resurrection from the dead, and an immortal state to follow, in the same manner as Daniel taught, and as we now hold.

On the whole, I think, that the doctrine of immortality is entirely a doctrine of Christian revelation; that it was revealed to man soon after, and not before, the lapse of our nature; that it is a benefit of the grace of redemption; and that, in all probability, had it not been for this merciful dispensation, we should never have been dignified with an endowment and a privilege so exalted.

That the doctrine was known in the world before the full promulgation of the gospel by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and even in the earlier ages of human degeneracy, is no argument either against its supernatural revelation, or of its revelation as a part of the gospel system. The gospel, as I have said, was revealed, though obscurely and partially, immediately after the lapse; and what further light was gradually thrown on it, it is not necessary

with precision to state. We observe however, that the notion of expiation, represented or prefigured as it was, by the appointed sacrifice of animals, very early prevailed, together with the expectation of a resurrection and a general judgment, as well as of the immortality of the soul. The three former we readily believe, notwithstanding the early discovery of them, to be matters of purely christian revelation, and why not as well the latter? It is said, I know, by some, that all we can learn from the declaration of the apostle to Timothy, is, that by the gospel, this truth, which was partially known before, was, by the additional informations of the gospel, made more evident, and thereby was fully and finally confirmed. Nevertheless, I must believe, that to "*bring to light*" does as well intend to make known what was not known before, as to make what was known before more evident and certain; and I also believe, that it is not possible to bring forward a single argument independent of the gospel, on which a mind of any intelligence and consideration can ground a real persuasion of its immortal existence. How greatly should this high appointment, and the discovery of it endear the christian system unto us! and what reason have we to unite in that grateful exclamation of the apostle, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

If it was ever reasonable to expect from God a supernatural revelation of his will, to instruct mankind in the knowledge of the law of their duty, and to propose to them the hopes of eternal life, and the means of salvation, this revelation must necessarily have been confirmed by such miraculous operations as would demonstrate that it was God who had spoken. The christian revelation, conformably to this principle, was confirmed by numerous, and most illustrious miracles, performed in the presence of multitudes of the people, and, especially, in the presence of those disciples whom our Saviour had chosen to be the constant spectators of these sublime evidences of his divine mission, and the witnesses of them to the ends of the earth. The character of these witnesses, and the sufferings which they endured for their testimony, place the credit of their histories beyond all reasonable doubt.

They were plain unlettered men, indeed, taken from the inferior occupations of life, and entirely simple and artless in their manners. But, if we may form a judgment from their writings, and

from the noble and excellent principles of morals and religion which these writings contain, they were men of the soundest understandings, and of warm and rational piety, which would render it impossible that they should be deceived themselves by any fictitious pretences to a divine power, and should free them from every suspicion of attempting to impose a history of false wonders upon the world. Is there the smallest probability that men, confined to their humble walks in life, should ever have conceived the idea of converting the universe, and that in the name of a crucified man, unless they had acted under a divine direction? If they had been capable of conceiving the idea, is it possible that such an enterprise should have succeeded, especially in the enlightened age in which they lived, unless they had been supported by the most evident truth? So certain and undeniable, indeed, was the miraculous history of our blessed Lord, that Celsus, the most ingenious and bitter of the enemies of the christian name among the philosophers of that time, does not pretend to controvert the miracles ascribed to Christ; but has, at once, the weakness, and the effrontery, to impute them to the powers of magic.

In the writings of the apostles and evangelists we perceive the strongest characters of sincerity and truth. There is no appearance of disguise and art, such as is usually employed to cover deception; but, on the other hand, an undesigning simplicity, which speaks powerfully to the heart, evidently reigns through the whole of their narrations. It might well be expected, from the frailty of human nature, that impostors, in some parts of their systems, would designedly justify their own vices, or inadvertently introduce principles which would betray to an ingenious observer some predominant and vicious inclination. But, in the histories and epistles of the disciples of Christ, you discern none but the purest precepts of morality, the noblest sentiments of a genuine and rational piety. And, beyond all reasonable doubt, that admirable and profound wisdom which distinguishes their writings, that perfect moral code which they have prescribed, and that pure and sublime theology which runs through the whole, so far superior to what was to be expected from their education and rank in life, and excelling whatever has been produced on these subjects by the most venerated sages of the pagan world, all carry with them strong evidence of the truth, and the divine mission of the holy evangelists and apostles. We may say of them, as the astonished fellow-citizens of Jesus said of their divine master, *whence had these men this wisdom*, unless it were given them from above? If they had been impostors they would probably have betrayed

themselves by their art, and by some immoral tendency in their system. On the other hand, had they been enthusiasts, there is the highest probability that they would have betrayed themselves by innumerable extravagances. Widely different is that which comes from the Spirit of God, from whatever has its source only in the wisdom, or the weakness of man.*

Admitting the sound understanding, the wisdom, and integrity of the apostles and evangelists, which, after a candid examination of their writings, cannot be denied them, the circumstances under which they published the gospel to the world, afford a proof, of the strongest kind, of the authenticity of its miraculous history.

Men, impelled by an ardent ambition, may often encounter dangers, or sufferings, in the pursuit of glory, or of power. And avarice may prompt them to toil for wealth. But, without any prospect of emolument, or of honour; nay, in the very face of poverty, contempt, and hatred, of the fiercest persecutions, and the most cruel deaths, voluntarily to undertake the cause of a crucified master, from whom they could have no further expectations; and, with a heroism and patience, worthy of the highest virtue, and the noblest ends, to propagate a deliberate imposture, only for his glory; is contrary to all the known principles of human nature, and is utterly incredible. Jesus forewarned his disciples that they should meet with contumely and reproach, with persecution, and with death, in every formidable shape. With such discouragements before them, is it consistent with what we know of the motives of human action, to believe that they would have embarked in such an undertaking, unless they had possessed the fullest conviction of the truth of that miraculous history which they proclaimed with such indefatigable and heroic zeal; and unless they had entertained the most certain hopes of those immortal rewards, which could have been assured to them only by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, of which they were wit-

* In reading the writings of the New Testament, and particularly the discourses of our blessed Saviour, as recorded by the evangelists, we must be forcibly struck, as Dr. Paley justly remarks, with the difference between that calm, temperate, and rational spirit of piety which pervades them, and the rantings, excesses, and unholy familiarities with the Deity, which take place in those enthusiastic sects in modern times, which are composed chiefly of a people taken from the same orders of society with the evangelists. And if we compare the morality and theology of the sacred writers, with those of the ancient schools of philosophy, shall we not be equally struck with the superiority of the fishermen of Judea, over the politest and profoundest scholars of Greece and Rome?

nesses? Who then can doubt of their perfect knowledge of the facts which they relate, when they were so long the immediate companions, and intimate friends of their divine Master? And who can doubt of their sincerity, and truth, when we see them persevering in their testimony, and reiterating it in the face of the greatest dangers, and under the pressure of the severest sufferings? They were loaded with chains, they were thrust into dungeons, they were lacerated with scourging, they were crucified, sawn asunder, clothed in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to be devoured by dogs, burnt at the stake, invested with pitched shirts, to which, when fire was applied, they were turned into the circus, to light the barbarous sports of the insulting populace. But all these terrors combined were not able to shake their firmness, or induce them to retract one tittle of their testimony. Could they have been induced only to deny the resurrection of Christ, they might have delivered themselves from their miseries. Yet their dying breath, their last accents, were employed in confirming their unwavering testimony.*

Among all the facts, then, in the history of the world, to which we yield the most undoubting assent, which of them comes confirmed to us by an evidence so clear and unequivocal as the miracles, and, consequently, the divine mission, of our blessed Saviour? The witnesses of them were men of the soundest understanding, and therefore most capable of observing with accuracy the phenomena before them; they were men of the purest hearts and the most disinterested conduct, who could have no intention therefore to deceive; and they were evidently free

* A crowd of writers, pagan as well as christian, confirm this representation of the sufferings of the primitive disciples, and their astonishing constancy in maintaining the truth of the resurrection, and the miracles of Jesus Christ. Suetonius, Pliny, Juvenal, Martial, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Tacitus, all bear witness to these facts. A single sentence only I quote from the last of these writers, in the name of all the rest. "Their sufferings at their execution," says he, speaking of the christians, "were aggravated by insult and mockery. For some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified, and others were wrapped in pitched shirts, and set on fire, when the day was closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night."

The constancy with which the christians endured their tortures, was ascribed, by their enemies, to madness, or to obstinacy. But, how much more reasonable would it have been to ascribe it to a deep and heartfelt conviction of the truth of their religion, and its infinite importance to the happiness of mankind?

from all illusive heats of enthusiasm, which might render them liable to be deceived themselves. Their testimony derives additional credit from their own original and inveterate prejudices, which were so difficult to be subdued, and which nothing seemed able to conquer but the most illustrious demonstrations of a divine power every where accompanying their divine Master. They, along with their whole nation, expected to find in the Messiah a mighty temporal prince, who should restore the kingdom to Israel, and extend his dominion, and the glory of the Jewish people, over the universe. In this kingdom it was natural for them, as the companions of the future prince, to expect the highest honours and distinctions. So rooted were these prejudices, and so strongly supported by national error, and individual vanity, that it was one of the most difficult tasks in the ministry of Jesus to eradicate them from their minds; nor was this, indeed, fully effected, till they were supernaturally enlightened on the day of Pentecost. When he spoke to them of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, they were unwilling, or unable to comprehend him. And when, instead of the magnificent hopes which they had conceived for themselves, and for their nation, he presented to them only the approaching ruin of the holy city, the pride and boast of every Israelite; only the sufferings and deaths to which they should be exposed in preaching his name to a world hostile to the spirit of his institutions, they were often ready to abandon his service. Nothing could have been sufficient to recall them to their arduous duties, or to attach them to his humble fortunes, in the midst of such cruel disappointments, and such menacing dangers, but those works of omnipotence daily wrought by his hands, which carried to their inmost souls the irresistible conviction that he was the Son of God. They could not be persuaded that the Messiah could die, till they saw him expire. They neither believed nor understood the resurrection of the dead, till they had seen him, who had conquered death, restored from the tomb. Even then it was long before their astonished senses could admit the full conviction of a fact which contradicted all the prepossessions of experience and of education. They conversed with him, they touched him, they thrust their hands into his wounded side, before they could be convinced that it was their beloved Master whom they saw again, and whom they thought they had lost forever. Their own prejudices were first to be conquered by the most powerful evidence, before they set out to conquer the prejudices of the world. But then, no forms of danger, or of death, could shake their constancy; such fast hold had the conviction, and the infi-

nite importance of this fact taken on their minds. It is a fact concerning which it was impossible for them to be mistaken: and such were the circumstances under which they delivered their testimony, that it was not possible they should have intended to impose a fictitious narrative upon the world. Their toils, their self-denials, their sufferings, their deaths, together with the entire relinquishment of all their former prejudices, are the strongest vouchers for their sincerity and truth.

Will it be asked if there are not, in history, many examples of enthusiasts who have died for false principles with astonishing firmness? But, besides its being evident that there is, in the characters and writings of the apostles, no tincture of enthusiasm, there is a wide difference between dying for *an opinion*, and in attestation of *a fact*. In our opinions, however honestly they may be formed, we may err: yet they may have the same influence on the mind, to inflame or to fortify it, as truth. But, with regard to facts, when the senses are not impaired, when the judgment is sound, and the heart is honest, and when men possess such means of judging with certainty as the apostles enjoyed, it is impossible to be deceived; and, not being deceived, it is contrary to all the principles of human action to suppose that these holy men should voluntarily encounter such dangers, endure such toils and sufferings, and at length lay down their lives in order to propagate a known and unprofitable falsehood.

From these reflections, if they are well founded, it results, that no moral evidence for any historical fact can be higher than that by which the sacred history has come down confirmed to us.

M.

OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, WHEN UNDER CONVICTION.

NO. III.

In the lives of the worst of men there are often moments when religion impresses the heart, and produces partial effects. Herod of Judea heard John the Baptist gladly, and in consequence of his admonition reformed many abuses in his life and reign. Felix trembled when the apostle reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and determined at a convenient season, to give him a full and patient hearing on these subjects. Agrippa was *almost* persuaded to be a Christian. Nebuchadnezzar also on various occasions experienced meltings of heart, when rays of wisdom entered his mind; but, soon, alas! they were excluded, and he was again involved in the thickest darkness.

When Daniel made known to the king, the dream which had escaped him, with the interpretation thereof, which none of the Chaldeans could do, " Then the king, Nebuchadnezzar, fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation, and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret." Daniel ii. 46, 47. *Prostration* was usual in eastern countries to express respect for a superior, either in rank or sanctity; it was also, as in this instance, an act of worship. Cornelius would *thus* have done divine honour to Peter: John to the Angel: Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel. Such honour, we are informed, was positively refused in the two first instances, and no doubt also in the last, though the fact is not particularly recorded. Daniel had repeatedly declared that the king was not indebted for the discovery now made either to him, or to any man on earth, but to God alone, from whom nothing, past, present, or future, is either unknown, or veiled in any obscurity. The discovery of this attribute of Deity, although not effectual for the conversion of the king, yet it predisposed his mind for a more thorough and permanent effect which was afterwards produced.

Another season of mercy is particularly recorded. Infatuated with pride and passion, the king commanded the three Jews who would not worship the golden image which he had set up, to be cast bound into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. It was a vain attempt. Looking upon the furnace, the king said, " Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? they answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. *Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god,

except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghil, because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort." Dan. iii. 24—29. Formerly convinced that there was a God of infinite knowledge, he was now convinced of his almighty power. He began to believe and to tremble. A great point was gained, although by no means a complete conquest. He was still self-willed and passionate, furious and ungovernable. The object was changed, but the disposition was the same. Compelled to believe that the God of Daniel possessed more knowledge, and more power than the gods whom he served, he did Daniel reverence; and breathing destruction against all who should vilify Daniel's God, he became an outrageous advocate of his cause.

A strong conviction of the truth, and the most intemperate zeal, are no evidences that religion has its seat in the heart, since the worst of men have felt such conviction, and been transported by such zeal. There is a new modification of the conduct, which, with superficial observers, may pass as an entire change, when, in reality, it is only partial, leaving the heart destitute of love to God and man, and as much as ever under the influence of sinful passions.

Nebuchadnezzar, some time after this, terrified by a vision which foreboded an unusual calamity of the most degrading nature, had recourse, as on other occasions, to his wise men, but Daniel only could resolve his doubt. Foreseeing the calamity which threatened him, Daniel was constrained earnestly to entreat the king to break off his wicked courses, as the only step which could promise him any hope of security. Nebuchadnezzar discovered more temper and consideration, at this time, than he had done at any former period, which renders it probable that his religious impressions had not altogether been ineffectual; and that the counsel now given by the Prophet was favourably received, and in a measure acted upon, procuring a suspension for a whole year, of the threatened evil. But on a return of his impious and rebellious temper, so offensive to the holiness of God, a sense of which had restrained him for a time, he fell into the lowest state of degradation and misery.

It is necessary that sinners be convinced, before they can be converted; but if conviction were enough, Nebuchadnezzar was already a true convert. He found it vain to contend with a God of such knowledge, of such power, and of such holiness, and he

resolved, that all the world, on the severest penalties, should think in this, as he did. Devils are as much convinced of the knowledge, of the power, and of the holiness of God, as Nebuchadnezzar was, or could be, and yet remain devils still. The out works only were thrown down, whilst the enemy kept possession of the strong hold. Nebuchadnezzar approached the threshold, but had not yet entered the sanctuary. The obstinacy and rebellion of the heart were still unsubdued: indeed he acted with great extravagance under the various convictions which have now been detailed, and the fruit produced did not come to perfection. A train of operations however had commenced, which finally issued in the most extensive and astonishing effects.

PHILOLOGOS.

ON THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN CHRISTIANS TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

When the mind is perplexed with doubt and uncertainty, in regard to some of the important articles of religion, one is ready to wish that the sentiments of those who saw and conversed with the inspired writers, or of the inspired writers themselves, could be exactly known on these topics. But this would perhaps, after all, be of little avail, if the wish could be gratified. Those who saw and conversed with the apostles, had, no doubt, a privilege in many respects; but in this, it is probable, they had very little. For not only the fathers, but the apostles themselves, would have had to refer to the revealed will of God for a decision of our inquiries. The apostles were not at all times under the influence of the Spirit of unerring truth. Paul tells us in regard to some things that he had "no commandment of the Lord," and that he spoke "by permission and not by commandment." Those revelations which were of the most importance, if not all that were of public importance, were no doubt recorded by the apostles, and have come down to us. If, then, we could converse, not only with the ancient fathers of the church, but with the apostles themselves, they would refer to the very revelation which we have now in our hands to decide on our difficulties. Whatever they could say more than this, would be no more than the advice and opinion of good and experienced men, and they themselves would probably tell us so. We have, then, actually, the very means of deciding on difficult or doubtful points that the primitive christians had; and with these we should be content and thankful. The purity of practice among the primitive christians gene-

rally (for we know there were some things far from purity among them) might be edifying, and their exemption from the prejudices and prepossessions which controversies since their time have produced, might lead us to view some things in the written word, somewhat differently from what we do at present; but still we have the very same standards which they had. And, on the whole, the controversies that have existed, the experience of the *practical influence* of certain systems and principles, which is one of the best tests, the numerous, and learned, and judicious commentaries, and the canvassing and comparing of sentiments, and of the different parts of the sacred volume, give us some advantages which the primitive christians had not, and perhaps put us fully on a footing with them in the investigation of religious truth.

G.

EXPOSITION.

OF GENESIS iv. 23, 24.

Our present translation of Lamech's speech is nearly unintelligible, though undoubtedly it is perfectly accurate. It may therefore be useful to remark, that the Hebrew is capable of three different interpretations, all equally literal; consequently we are at liberty to choose that which is most agreeable to the context. The first interpretation is that of our translators: "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt." The second, and perhaps the best, is offered by bishop Lowth, and before him by Houbigant. "I have slain a man for wounding me, and a young man for striking me." (Prælect. Poet. iv. p. 52, 53.) In this case, the sense will be, if Cain, who slew his brother *unprovoked*, shall be secured by the Deity sevenfold from all human vengeance (see Gen. iv. 15.) surely Lamech, who slew a man *in the act of self-defence*, shall be secured seventy and seven fold. The third interpretation is that of Wickliff, to be found in his MS. Bible, which at least is more intelligible than our present translation. "I have slayn a man by my wound, and a yong wexynge man by yyolent beetynge." It is a singular circumstance, that all these renderings are equally literal. *Ch. Ob.*

OF ISAIAH ix. 5.

In our present translation, this passage is rendered as follows: "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire."

These words immediately precede the famous prediction of the Messiah, with which, as they now stand, they certainly appear to have very little connexion. Dr. Kennicott therefore proposes a different translation: "Every weapon of the warrior used in battle, and the garment rolled in much blood (or often rolled in blood) is for burning, even fuel of the fire." This agrees very well with the promise of peace at the advent of the Messiah, and is the counterpart of the words of the psalmist. "When God maketh wars to cease in all the world, he breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder, and *burneth* the chariots in the fire." In the above mentioned manuscript translation of Wickliff, this passage is thus rendered. "Al violent raveyn with noyse, and a cloth medlid with blood, shal be into brennynge, and shal be the meate of fyer." *Ch. Ob.*

OF ECCLESIASTES vii. 16, 17.

Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?

It sometimes requires wisdom even to understand the words of the wise. These verses, particularly the first, have perplexed many. It appears strange to warn us against excess of goodness, when it is certain we can never do good enough for God, or be too diligent or active in his service. Irreligious persons have gladly availed themselves of this text, as an argument against those who are conscientious in their principles and practice, serving God with fidelity and zeal, and worshipping him constantly in public, in their families, and in their closets. Such pious characters they charge with being righteous overmuch, affirming, that it is at their conduct that Solomon here points his censures. The opinions of ungodly men about the Scriptures ought indeed to have no weight, as they cannot be supposed to understand what they seldom read, or attend to. But as some well-meaning persons have found a difficulty in this passage, it may be proper for their sakes, to make a few observations upon it.

Some have understood the wise man as here giving a caution against self-righteousness, as if he had said, "Be not righteous in thy own esteem, nor value thyself on account either of thy goodness or wisdom, as such a conduct cannot but be displeasing to God, and if persisted in, will issue in the ruin of thy soul." This sense is perfectly consistent with the doctrines of scripture, which continually discourage high thoughts of ourselves, and call

upon us to be humbled before God, for having sinned against him, and come short of his glory. Therefore whether it be, or be not a just exposition of Solomon's meaning in the passage before us, such a caution is always proper and necessary.

Others conceive these two verses to contain a dialogue between an irreligious and a religious character. According to this interpretation the former may be supposed to say: "Why all this stir about religion? There is surely no occasion for so much solicitude respecting it. Be not righteous overmuch. Be moderate and prudent, and do not pretend to more wisdom than others; if you do, your temporal interest will be ruined; why then should you destroy yourself?" To this the religious man may be supposed to reply: "Let me rather ask you, Why all this eagerness in sinful pursuits? Why must God be insulted, his word despised, and his threatenings set at defiance? Beware, lest while thou cautionest another not to be overwise, thou prove thyself a fool in the extreme. Beware, lest thou who warnest another not to destroy himself, provoke God to destroy thee. Wicked and deceitful men live not out half their days. Quit, therefore, thy vicious courses. Why shouldst thou die before thy time?" This interpretation renders the passage sufficiently intelligible, and the answer of the wise man will then stand directly opposed to the absurd cavil of the fool.

But perhaps we may with perfect propriety consider both the verses, as the solid counsel of the same wise and pious person. A misconception of the true nature of religion frequently leads men into gross errors. Some of our religious opinions may also be pushed so far, and carried to such an extravagant pitch, as to require the restraint of wisdom and sound discretion. We may, for instance, be said to be righteous overmuch, when our zeal unrestrained by prudence, hurries us on both to rash words and intemperate actions. It is being righteous overmuch, when we lay great stress upon matters of inferior moment, and bind ourselves, or endeavour to bind others, to the observance of things which the word of God has nowhere commanded. Thus, the church of Rome, under the notion of promoting greater sanctity, has forbidden the clergy to marry, and under the pretence of mortifying and keeping under the body, has enjoined fasting to a degree which neither the word of God requires, nor the constitution of man can bear. We are righteous overmuch, when professing to make religion our grand concern, we neglect the duties of life, and give the world occasion to charge us with being slothful in our business, and regardless of our families. We are righteous

overmuch, when we make religion the perpetual subject of discussion and dispute. We are righteous overmuch, when tenderness of conscience is allowed to degenerate into unnecessary scrupulosity, so that in matters wholly indifferent, we are harassed, in ascertaining the conduct to be pursued, by perplexing doubts and fears, which prey upon the mind, and destroy its peace. In a word, we are righteous overmuch, and also overwise, when we too curiously pry into the mysteries of religion, and are eager to discover what God has thought fit to conceal, labouring to understand and explain what was never meant to be comprehended, but to be believed.

These may serve as specimens of that religious extravagance, to which the wise man probably alluded, when he cautions us not to be righteous overmuch. But however needful this caution may be, that in the 17th verse, *Be not overmuch wicked*, is of far more general application. The expression does not imply that there is a certain pitch of wickedness, to which men may proceed without danger to themselves, the word overmuch being used only to keep up the correspondence of style between the two verses. On the contrary, every degree of sin is attended with danger, both to our present and eternal interests; and very often, even in this life, the judgments of God overtake the obstinate offender, so that he dies before his time. Many examples might be adduced from scripture, of persons suddenly cut off in the midst of a sinful course, and sent loaded with their guilt to appear before God. These things ought to make the irreligious tremble, as God is the same holy being, sin the same evil thing now, which it ever has been. Take then the timely warning, Let the wicked forsake his way, &c. *Ch. Ob.*

AN ORIGINAL LETTER,

From the Rev. Samuel Davies, formerly president of the college of New-Jersey.

Dear Sir,

I heartily thank you for your letter and the manuscripts enclosed. If I happen to be in a poetic fit, I shall probably pursue the plan of a Christmas poem, and send you the egregious production; but it is a thousand to one but I shall make many wild excursions from the track you have prescribed. I am indebted to you for two valuable thoughts your prose manuscripts suggested to me; that *time*, with respect to moral agents in a state of probation, does not consist in a succession of night and day, sitting,

walking, sleeping, eating, drinking; but in a succession of opportunities to prepare for our immortal state; and, that when persons are confirmed either in virtue or vice, *time* is at an end with respect to them, and they are ripe for eternity. O that we could pass the time of our pilgrimage below under the tenderest impression of these important truths!

Though I have not yet had your leave to tease you with my poetastry; yet I presume to impose the enclosed upon you, and that as an omen of future trouble, unless horror seize you at the dismal denunciation. The *Survey of Human Nature* appears to me a moving subject; and I am sorry I could not do it justice. The poem on Psalm lxxiii. 25, consists chiefly of thoughts borrowed from Mrs. Rowe; as your acquaintance with her writings will soon suggest to you. Indeed I cannot be her reader long, without commencing poet. The poem on *Conjugal Love* is wholly my own; not only as to invention, but intention. You may see my design in it, in the last paragraph but one. If ever I wrote any thing with tender emotion and sincerity, it was this. My thoughts were turned towards it by occasion of some pleuretic symptoms I had not long since; which, through divine goodness, are removed. The weeping tenderness of my dear other self at that time, wounded my heart with the quickest sensations. I should think myself happy to promote conjugal affection in the world; where the indifferency of neighbours, or the malignity of fiends, is too often substituted in its stead; and if this poem may be thought to have this tendency, I shall incline to publish it. It awaits its doom wholly from your determination. The other poems mentioned, you may also correct, and dispose of, as you please, only reserve them for me; for, you may be sure, I have a paternal fondness for my own dear offspring, however deformed; and, therefore, would not willingly be bereaved of them. I also enclose two copies of verses too private to be made public; which, if they prove excitements to you to join in grateful acknowledgements of our mercies and deliverances, I have my end.

I informed you in my last, that I had given but little heed to the importunity of some of my friends to publish some of my poems; but since that, they have told me, that if I should consent to send the copy to the press, they would bear the trouble and expense: and this, with their other arguments, has at length determined me to comply. My principle design is, the religious entertainment of ordinary capacities; for, however willing I am, I despair of ever pleasing the nice and judicious. Bad poetry, to myself, is the most fulsome, nauseous stuff in the world; though

I can make a shift to bear with indifferent prose; and could I put off the relation of an author, and assume that of an impartial reader, it is likely I should doom my productions to perpetual oblivion. But, it is some kind of happiness that the generality of mankind have a coarser taste; and that what is sublime exceeds their capacities. I shall, therefore, send you the collection of poems before they are published, for the following purposes: To correct those blunders that are corrigible, without altering the whole poem; to pick and cull such as you think worthy of a public view; (for some I believe will not deserve it; or, if they should, would too much swell the volume;) and to direct to profitable additions. I shall endeavour to send them by parcels, successively, before the General Court, when I expect to be in town, that I may then hear your remarks, and consult about them. And I request you to mix the critic with the friend.

What affords me the greatest discouragement, attended with painful reflections, in such cases, is the ambitious and selfish spirit I find working in me, and intermixing itself with all my most refined and disinterested aims. Fame, for which some professedly write, is a strong, though a resisted temptation to me; and I often conclude, my attempts will never be crowned with remarkable success, till the divine glory be more sincerely my aim, and I be willing to decrease, that Jesus may increase. It is easy to reason down this vile lust of fame; but, Oh! it is hard to extirpate it from the heart. There is a paper in Dr. Watts's miscellaneous thoughts on this subject, which characterizes me, in this respect, as exactly as any thing I have seen; and a poem of his, entitled *Sincere Praise*, is often the language of my heart.

——" Pride, that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform;
Curst pride, that creeps securely in,
And swells a little worm.

The very songs I frame
Are faithless to thy cause;
And steal the honours of thy name
To build their own applause!"

What surprises me most is, that the self-elating passion should be so strong, when my inability happily obliges me to despair of gratifying it. This, among a thousand other things, affords me the mortifying conviction, that I am a fallen creature; and, at best, but slowly recovering from the ruins of the universal apos-

tacy. Never will my soul be happy, till I can fully adopt that surprising description of a christian temper in Romans xiv. 7, 8.

I met with the following lines in a piece called the Callipædia, which pleased me exceedingly; where the soul is compared to the Deity; the head to his seat; the senses, and animal spirits to his ministering angels; reflection to his self-complacence, &c.

" Man's head resembles Jove's imperial seat,
In which enthron'd, he sways the heav'nly state,
And with assembled Gods consults of fate:
The winged envoys all in shining crouds
Attend his throne, and watch his awful nods;
Catch his commands, and through the liquid air
To the low world the sacred errand bear:
Just so the head of man contains within
The intellect, with rays of light divine:
The senses stand around; the spirits roam
To seize and bring the fleeting objects home.
" Reflection is the last, and greatest bliss;
When turning inward with inverted eyes,
The soul itself, and all its charms, surveys;
The deep impressions of celestial grace
And image of the Godhead: no alloy
Of flesh its sprightly beauties can destroy,
Nor death, nor fate can snatch the lasting joy.
Thro' every limb the active spirit flows,
Diffusing life and vigour as it goes,
But is itself unmixt, and free from dross.
Thus, while great Jove the whirling engine guides,
And o'er the times and rolling year presides;
Still as he turns the rapid wheels of chance,
Himself immortal and unchang'd remains,
And when the empty scene of nature cloys,
Sinks in the Godhead, and himself enjoys.

Our sincere affections wait on you and your's. It is the happy prerogative of benevolence in the most impotent circumstances, to form unbounded wishes for the felicity of its object; and friendship can make frequent aërial migrations to the distant residence of a friend, when it can do no more.

I am, dear sir,

Your's very affectionately,

SAMUEL DAVIES.

March 2d, 1750—51.

REASONS OF REPOSE.

[*Conctinued from page* 342.]

As it is evidently the design of revelation to recover an alienated creature to his God, so I am penetrated with the wisdom and grace discovered in suiting the means of recovery to the apostacy of fallen man. The scripture method of recovery accommodates itself to man as he *is*, not as he might have been. It comes down to his state and case, however desperate; it aims by every means to win his heart, as well as alarm his conscience. Man, like Adam, flies from the voice of his God to some hiding place, but the voice follows him, *O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help.* Sottish man would stop his ears to the voice of his friend, but God *thundereth marvellously* in them. He falls among thieves, but the good Samaritan pities him, binds up his wounds, and provides for his wants. He is still prone to wander like a silly sheep, but the good Shepherd restores him, and *beseeches him to be reconciled.* The offer of such a friendship astounds him; he feels troubled at the strange proposal—

"Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?"

The good Shepherd layeth down his life to prove it.

When I contemplate the authentic and unbroken channel through which this sacred record is brought to my hand; the various translations that have preserved it intire from the first ages; its marvellous preservation under every attempt to destroy it; the jealousy of opposite sects watching over each other on any attempt to corrupt it; the attestation of its bitterest enemies to all its important facts, corroborated by *their* character, as well as that of its friends and adherents; when I regard the rites and ordinances set up at the time to commemorate those facts, and which stand as monuments recording them to this day; when I behold the present state of the Jews, and mark their still obstinate adherence to that very record which has so long, and so expressly foretold the state in which I see them; I say, whenever I contemplate these particulars, I feel overwhelmed with evidence; I say to myself, *the word of the Lord is tried*—a *cunningly devised fable* will stand no such test; and I am by necessity brought to the following dilemma: Either that *this record is true*, or, it must be strangely determined in providence that, *the sincere and diligent seeker of truth shall inevitably be deceived.*

But I cannot for a moment admit the latter supposition; for I dare not think of God but as holy, just, and good; and *as a*

rewarder of those who diligently seek Him; but to suppose that He, who foresees, directs, and governs every event, would concur in the propagation of a plausible lie; that this lie should be attended with such strong and various evidences; that it should be so like a ray from heaven, a light shining in a dark place; so like a balm to the wounded, a direction to the humble inquirer, and a way of holiness to the ungodly: To suppose, I say, that God would permit all this in full view of its deceiving the seeker of truth, and mocking and disappointing those who desire above all things to serve and glorify Him! Verily, such a supposition tends to blasphemy; it supposes the Most Holy to act like a demon, and it also implies that infidels and profligates are the only children of light and liberty. Some object to mysteries, but what mystery in the Bible is to be compared with that which must follow on such a supposition!

I see at this day the very opposers of the gospel stand among the proofs of it. The vagrant and stumbling *Jew*—the supercilious *Greek*—the disputatious *Heretic*—the sneering *Infidel*—the loose *Professor*—all these become involuntary witnesses that the Author of this Book is a searcher of hearts. He has expressly written their history, and accurately drawn their characters before they were born; and were not such characters afterwards to appear, the scriptures would be unintelligible.

I find some simple believers in danger of being overborne by the insolence with which the men of this world treat the counsel of God, and those who fear him; a blind majority alarms them; they also are not aware how plausibly an artful sophist can darken and confound the clearest evidence. For my part, I see only what might naturally be expected. Would it not be strange if these birds of night did not hate the morning? if they did not endeavour to shut out its beams? Was I not one of them? Am I not in their secret? Did I not once speak as they do now? and, do I not know the reason?

[*To be continued.*]

ANECDOTES.

An anecdote recorded in Milner's History of the Church of Christ, will serve to show the almost incredible lengths to which, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, the popish agents proceeded in the detestable traffic of indulgences. "When Tetzel was at Leipsic, and had scraped together a great deal of money, from all ranks of people, a nobleman who suspected the impos-

ture, put this question to him, 'Can you grant absolution for a sin which a man shall intend to commit in future?' 'Yes,' replied the frontless commissioner, 'but on condition that the proper sum of money be actually paid down!' The nobleman instantly produced the sum demanded, and in return received a diploma, signed and sealed by Tetzel, absolving him from the unexplained crime which he secretly intended to commit. Not long after, when Tetzel was about to leave Leipsic, the nobleman made inquiry respecting the road he would probably travel, waited for him in ambush at a convenient place, attacked and robbed him; then beat him soundly with a stick, sent him back again to Leipsic with his chest empty, and at parting said; 'This is the fault I intended to commit, and for which I have your absolution."

Extract from the Journal of the Rev. John Westly.

"Wednesday, 9th, 1741. I rode over to a neighbouring town, to wait on a justice of the peace, a man of candour and understanding, before whom, I was informed, their angry neighbours had carried a whole waggon load of these new heretics.* But when he asked what they had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgot. At length one said, 'Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and besides, they pray from morning to night.' Mr. S. asked, 'But have they done nothing besides?' 'Yes sir,' said an old man: 'An't please your worship, they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! and now she is as quiet as a lamb.' 'Carry them back, carry them back,' replied the justice, 'and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

A PIOUS man, who had been much engaged in the performance of religious duties, was through the prevalence of temptation "overtaken in a fault." The news of it, coming to the ears of one of his neighbours, who was also a professor of religion, he remarked as follows: "I thought so—such a fuss—so much talk and noise about religion, I expected would end in this. We now see, it is not all gold that glitters; and I shall always suspect those for hypocrites, who pretend to have more religion than their neighbours." The same unhappy circumstance was mentioned to another member of the same church. He held his peace, and the tear of sympathetic sorrow was seen to fall from his eyes. Reader, which of the above characters most resembles thine own?

* The Methodists.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

A brief account of the proceedings of the Committee, appointed in the year 1795, by the yearly meeting of Friends of Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, &c. for promoting the improvement and gradual civilization of the Indian natives.

[*Continued from page* 504.]

In the summer of 1800, another of the Friends left this settlement; two of those who had resided at Oneida, having previously gone there, the Indians made some improvement this year. A pair of oxen which they purchased were found very serviceable in drawing fire-wood, &c. As yet they had not begun to plough. A small school was again attended to, but the Indians not promoting the attendance of their children, no regular school was afterwards kept, but instruction afforded to several of the children at convenient opportunities.

The Friends settled at Genesangohta, in a letter dated 8th month, 1801, mention, "It is apprehended that a much greater proportion of useful labour has been performed the present season on this river than has heretofore been done in the same space of time; and the prudence manifested amongst the natives in expending the present year's annuity, affords encouragement to hope, that the labour and concern of our society for their welfare, will not be fruitless: divers have purchased cows, &c. for the use of their families. The Indians belonging to the upper settlement on the river, have reserved money sufficient to purchase a yoke of oxen; some others are about to train young cattle for work, of their own rearing. The increasing attention that prevails amongst them in rearing cattle, hogs, &c. affords a prospect that they will, ere long, have a sufficient number of useful animals: several are preparing ground in order to sow wheat, and expect to have it in readiness this season.

In the 9th month of this year, three of the Committee visited the settlement, being accompanied by a young Friend, a blacksmith, who went to instruct some of the Indians in that useful and necessary occupation. Two of the visitors had been there before. The preceding spring the Indians first began to use a plough; the men performed the labour with a little instruction and assistance from Friends; they took a very cautious method of determining whether it was likely to be an advantageous change for them or not; several parts of a very large field were ploughed and the intermediate spaces prepared by their women with the hoe according to ancient custom; it was all planted with corn; the parts ploughed, besides the great saving of labour, produced much the heaviest crop, the stalks being more than a foot higher and proportionably stouter than those on the hoed ground. The corn was now ripe and gathering in, and as their stock of cattle was much increased, instead of letting the stalks and leaves perish on the ground as heretofore, they preserved them for winter fodder: several of them had mown grass, and made small stacks of hay; they had made a fence about two miles long which encloses the lower town and a large body of adjacent land fronting on the river; also several other fences within it, to separate the corn ground from the pasture, &c.

The cabins which they used to live in, were generally either gone to decay or pulled down; most of them had built good log houses with shingled roofs, and some of them with stone chimneys.

With the exception of houses and fences, the improvements at Jeneshadago did not bear a comparison with the upper settlements, where the Indians live more scattered. Their thus settling separate and detached from each other, was already manifestly more to their advantage than living together in villages; a chief who is not ashamed to be seen at work by the women of his own family, would probably be much mortified, were he discovered by a number of females, who, on such occasions, do not always refrain from ridicule; yet this false shame on the part of the men, and ridicule of the women, is wearing away in proportion as they become familiarized to each other's assistance in their little agricultural labours.

Friends requested a council with the chief women of the Jeneshadago town, which was readily granted, when they were favoured to make some communications pertinent to their situation. The women expressed their thankfulness to the Great Spirit for affording them this council; the words, they said, had sunk deep into their hearts, and they hoped would never be forgotten by them. Cornplanter and his brother Conedieu were present.

The Indians were become very sober, generally refraining from the use of strong drink, both at home and when

abroad among the white people. One of them observed to our Committee, "No more bark cabin, but good houses; no more get drunk here now this two year."

It was discovered that a little uneasiness or suspicion, was entertained by some Indians, fearing we might at some future time bring a charge against them for the services we had rendered and were rendering. After the first council was held with them, and the blacksmith introduced, with a request that two of their young men would learn the trade and become qualified to do their own work when our Friend left them, as it was not probable he would stay very long, they withdrew to hold a private council to confer on the proposition, from which they sent their Interpreters with the following message or queries to Friends.

"Whether we should at some future time demand from them land or money for the services which we had done, and were doing for them? that now they had but little land left, and if we should demand money, we knew they were poor and could not pay much.

They wished to know very clearly in writing about it, and would wait till the writing was ready; also whether we would leave the tools for the young men who might learn the blacksmith trade, when the blacksmith went home; or whether we would take them away:

To which the following answer was sent in writing.

"Brothers,

"We tell you now plainly as we told you before, that your brothers the Quakers do not want any of your money, or any of your skins, or any of your land, for any thing they have done for you, and that they never will bring any charge against you for any of these things; and we give you this writing to keep for ever, to make your minds perfectly easy in this respect. About the smith's tools, we cannot say much, but think we shall leave them all with you, if some of your young men will learn the trade."

At a council held with them after this writing was given, they said,

"Brothers,

"We understand the writing which you gave us very well, and our minds are now quite easy; two of our young men will learn the smith's trade, one from the lower town, one from the upper town."

Friends informed them they were rejoiced to find they had quit drinking whiskey and other strong liquors; and as they had held fast this good resolution so long, hoped they would continue to refrain from using it; for they must see the good effects of keeping sober, and having persons to instruct them; that when our Friends came here they had poor houses, many of them bark cabins, and no fences. Now they had most of them good warm houses, and many of them had good fences round their lots; some had stacks of hay for winter fodder; and a few had cleared land and sowed it with wheat and other grain. Also that their cattle were much increased, all which afforded great satisfaction.

It was supposed the quantity of corn, &c. raised this year, was nearly tenfold what it was when the settlement was first formed. This fall a few of the Indians made the first attempt to raise wheat. It may be proper here to remark that those who did something at farming, occasionally went out a-hunting, & many of the men adhered to the ancient customs, and left the women of their families to cultivate with the hoe what corn, &c. was needful for their subsistence.

Friends went from this place to Catarogus; they had been requested by the chiefs of that village to pay them a visit, as their sawmill was just finished; they had found some difficulty in settling with the millwrights, and desired assistance to accommodate it. That as one of the Friends who resides at Genesangohta, was acquainted with working a sawmill, they wished him to come and remain with them till he had instructed one of their people to take charge of the mill. When Friends reached Catarogus, the Indians were engaged in performing one of their worship dances, who retired very quietly to their respective habitations early in the evening, and collected again on the like occasion in the morning.

The chief difficulty between them and the millwrights was removed, and some smaller matters were put in a train of amicable adjustment. The Friend they requested, agreed to remain with them awhile, and to instruct one or more of their people how to work the mill.

The following is an extract of the speech of their chief warrior on behalf of the nation:

"Brothers,

"You have come at a time which has by us been previously set apart for performing worship to the Good Spirit, after our ancient customs. It is our way of worship, and to us solemn and serious, and not to be made light of; however different it may be from your mode, it is after the manner our forefathers have taught us. We hope you will excuse us

for not being so attentive to you as we could wish, and would have been, had we not been thus engaged.

"Brothers, We thank the Great Spirit for preserving you thus far on your long journey, and hope he will conduct you safely home, and favour you to meet with your women, children, and friends in health: we shall often think of you whilst on your journey, and desire you to inform your chiefs at home, that we are thankful for the sawmill irons, hoes, axes, ox-chains, &c. which they have given us.

"Brothers, we hope we shall give more attention to farming than we have hitherto done; we thank you for your advice about the sawmill, and for your Friend's consenting to remain with us awhile, to teach some of our people to work the mill."

By a letter form Friends at Genesangohta, dated 1st month 1802, it appears three young Indians discovered a willingness, and began to work at the smith's trade in the 11th month: two of them have been steadily engaged most of the time since, and for so short a period, have made considerable improvement: also that the Indians at Catarogus make out pretty well in working their sawmill.

The following paragraph is extracted from a letter written in the same month to one of the Committee: "Several families have got to the number of six and seven head of cattle, with other useful animals, who had not any when this settlement was first made, owing as they now tell us, to their great excesses in the use of whiskey, which at present seems much declined; not any is knowingly suffered to be brought into the settlements on this river: and if any are found out to have been overtaken with it, when among the whites, they are sharply reprimanded and exposed by the chiefs at their return. This has nearly the same effect among Indians, as committing a man to the workhouse among white people."

In a letter dated 5th month 30th, to the Committee, they say, "The present season has furnished rather greater marks of encouragement than has heretofore been discovered amongst the natives: considerable advancement is making in the different settlements on this river, in works of industry and usefulness. Eighteen or twenty thousand rails have been split and put up by the natives this spring; and thirteen or fourteen new lots enclosed; most of which have been cleared the present season."

The Indians of this and the upper settlement, have opened a very commodious road from this place, for about five miles up the river; before this road was opened, the way was difficult for man or beast to pass. Several have sowed lots of spring wheat. A number of the young men belonging to Cornplanters's town, have become quite capable of doing their own ploughing. The resolution against the introduction of strong liquor continues to be supported, and it is said the Indians of Buffaloe creek, have also made some stand against it. About the end of this year the smith returned home.

In the 9th month 1803, four of the Committee again visited the settlement; besides inspecting into the state of Indian improvements, &c. they were authorised to make a change in the manner of conducting the affairs there. Some of the Indians had increased their stock of cattle faster than their means of subsisting them through a long and rigorous winter: when their hay and other fodder became much reduced they applied to Friends to give them some: these requests could not be complied with to an extent proportionate to their necessity, without reducing the Friends to a like state of want; and fearing lest in future winters a renewal of similar requests, without the means of satisfying them, might disturb that harmony which had hitherto subsisted between us and the Indians, it was believed safe to embrace the opportunity which now offered of purchasing from a company of white people, an adjoining tract of land, and settling our Friends thereon.

When the committee arrived there, they learned that at a late council, the Indians delivered a speech to our Friends, expressing their willingness to a removal, but were desirous it should not be far up the river.

After fixing with the Indians the time for a general council to convene, Friends examined what improvements had been made by them; and also went to view the land on a creek called Tunesassah, which falls into the Alleghany river on the east side, about two miles above Genesangohta. Although it was not within the bounds offered us for sale, yet as it belonged to the same company, no doubt was entertained but it could be procured; the stream was found sufficient to work a mill, and it was believed a very good farm might be made there, the situation for our purposes being superior to any in that neighbourhood. The following is the purport of what passed at the council which was held at Genesangohta:

[*To be continued.*]

To the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Missions.

REV. SIR,

THE Synod of Pittsburgh, at their last meeting, directed the Board of Trust to transmit to you the following communication, to be laid before the Committee as soon as convenient.

The Board of Trust, in their report to the Synod, stated that the prospect of extensive and increasing usefulness among the Wyandot Indians is, in their opinion, now more flattering than it has ever been, since the first missionaries visited them; and that the mission at the present juncture, should be prosecuted with the greatest assiduity. The Synod, in consequence of the extensive missionary field now opened in that quarter, and the inadequacy of their own fund to answer the demand, and make the best improvement of the opportunity of doing good, which divine Providence has granted to the friends of missions, resolved to apply to the General Assembly, to take the missionary business into their hands, with the request, that the General Assembly should allow a committee of this Synod to transact the business in the intervals of the Assembly's meetings, but subject and accountable to the Assembly.

Also, that the Synod, being deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of the duty of taking some effectual measures for improving the favourable opportunity, which is now presented for civilizing and gospelizing the Indian tribes about Sandusky and its vicinities, have resolved to send a minister and a schoolmaster, as early as possible next spring, to reside amongst them. And, in order to give them a sufficient support, they resolved to appropriate the whole of their fund to that use, for one year: and also to apply to the standing committee of missions, to grant all the assistance which their known zeal for the promotion of the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, will excite them to afford, in consistency with their prior engagements.

The Synod have also petitioned Congress to grant to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, one half of the land reserved to the United States, at the lower rapids of Sandusky, two miles square, for the purpose of accommodating the minister and schoolmaster, and for raising food for the young Indians who may be sent to receive education. This is in conformity to the desire of the Indians themselves, who have also sent forward a petition for the same purpose.

The Synod have also agreed to appoint the Rev. Joseph Badger a stated missionary to the Indians, and Mr. Cephas Case a schoolmaster, to remove to Sandusky, as soon as possible, provided the Congress grant the land above mentioned.

The Synod have directed us to make these statements to you, and to make the application before mentioned to the standing committee of missions, for that aid from the missionary fund of the General Assembly which you can consistently grant. Upon this depends our proceeding in the proposed plan; as our missionary fund is altogether inadequate to the demand which must immediately be made in carrying it into effect.

A considerable part of the salaries of the minister and schoolmaster must be given in advance, and it is thought necessary to hire three men, as labourers, to improve the land, and erect the necessary buildings for the minister, schoolmaster and school. Their wages must be part in advance. It is also thought necessary to purchase one or two pair of oxen, one or two ploughs, and other farming utensils. All these, together with the provisions for their support, requisite to be laid in, will amount to a very considerable sum; such as it is not probable we can raise without aid from your fund.

The mission will be expensive at the outset; but we calculate that in a short time the land will be improved, and that the produce thereof will go far towards supporting the missionaries, and pupils who may come under their care.

We hope the committee will immediately take the matter into consideration, and that you will, as soon as possible, remit us an answer, stating what you think you can do, that we may proceed accordingly, as the board are instructed to put the resolutions of the Synod into execution as soon as it shall be practicable.

I am, reverend sir,
Respectfully your's,
JAMES HUGHS,
Secretary of the Board.

West-Liberty, Oct. 23, 1805.

Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green.

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On hearing the above letter read while in manuscript, a gentleman put into the hands of the chairman of the committee of missions one hundred dollars to encourage and assist the missionary enterprise here contemplated. If this example should in any degree be followed by others, probably it would be an application of money as extensively useful, as any that a pious and benevolent mind could devise.

OBITUARY.

A narrative of the exercises of a pious young woman, who died in the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia, in June, 1804, given by her intimate friend.

She remained in a state of carelessness in regard to the concerns of her soul till her three and twentieth year. Her mind appears to have been first seriously impressed by attending on the religious exercises of the Westlean methodists, whose meetings she frequented. Here she became sensible of the importance of sacred ordinances & institutions, so that she sought for & received christian baptism. This was administered in the Episcopal church to which her mother belonged. But she still attended methodist meetings, & was much attached to them. Frequently would she mourn over her past life and present state, and wonder if she should ever enjoy what she saw that some of her pious friends experienced. She continued in this state for some months, when she went to spend the winter with a friend. A number of young people visited at the house of this friend, who soon introduced her into all their frivolous amusements, which speedily dissipated those serious impressions which had lately been made on her soul, and left in their place nothing but mirth and gaiety. She lived in this kind of enjoyment (if such it may be called) for some time, daily becoming more indifferent and insensible to divine things, and more engaged and absorbed in the pursuits and pleasures of the world. At length, it pleased God to call her to an unexpected trial, which affected her with the deepest anguish. Yet it was not more painful in the endurance, than salutary in its effects on her heart. It brought her again to serious consideration; it unfolded to her view, in some degree, the depravity of her heart, & taught her the vanity of the world. The conflict of her mind at this time brought her nearly to a state of distraction. Conscious of her past declension in religious duties, estranged from her God, and entangled with the world, she knew not where to look for guidance and support. It was not long, however, before it pleased God to remove her from this place to the house of a pious friend, who had been engaged for some time in seeking and serving the Lord, and was indeed most happy to converse with her on the state of her soul. Here, likewise, she heard an account of the conviction and experience of a young christian. This roused her to more diligence and activity in the use of the means of grace, particularly in reading pious books. But at this time she seemed to contemplate what is called a work of conviction with dread. She now attended constantly on public worship in the presbyterian church. The pungent distress of her mind was abated, while yet she appeared to have no suitable views of her utter depravity and spiritual inability. She had not yet been enabled to forsake all, and to come to a freely offered Saviour. Her heart still lingered in the world, and her affections were particularly wedded to one earthly object. This object it pleased her heavenly Father to remove, and thus to prepare the way for a sweet and willing surrender of herself into the hands of her blessed Saviour. This she now resolved in the strength of the Lord to make. It was shortly after this, that a friend lent her "Booth's Reign of Grace," desiring her to read it with attention. She retired for this purpose, but had not proceeded far before her mind was beset with most awful terrors. She had as yet but little acquaintance with the doctrinal parts of religion, farther than as she had been taught by her own experience. The doctrine of electing grace seemed to overpower her soul. She trembled under the apprehension of being forever destined to condemnation; and as she found her mind more and more distressed, she resolved to quit reading the book, and to seek instruction and consolation from other sources. In this state of anxiety and distress, she continued for nearly one year. Sometimes, indeed, when in the sanctuary of God, and hearing of the love and compassion of the blessed Redeemer, some gleams of hope dispelled for a time, the darkness of her soul. Once in particular, on hearing a sermon on the power of faith, she felt unusually encouraged. She said, she thought she had some of this precious grace, and began to hope, that she should be interested in a Saviour's righteousness. Yet when she renewed her views of her depravity and guilt, she was tempted to doubt either of the sufficiency or the willingness of the Saviour to pardon her. In this way, the adorable Redeemer was pleased to lead her through that work of conviction she had so much dreaded, to the full experience of his love.

In the first week in May, 1803, she visited a friend in the country, and desired her to walk with her. Her friend inquired the state of her mind: "O!"

said she, " I have at length received the blessing. I was yesterday in my chamber, endeavouring to sing a hymn, and the Lord came and blessed me. Oh! I am the happiest creature in the world! my distress is all gone, as though I had never known any: my soul is filled with love and tranquillity; I can do nothing but praise and adore the wonders of redeeming love.

" Tongue cannot express
The joy and the peace
Of a soul in its earliest love"

She continued in this happy frame of mind, for some months, with scarce any interruption or abatement. In a short time after this, she applied for, and was admitted to communion in the presbyterian church. She went to the table of the Lord with hungering and thirsting desires after righteousness, and with a lively faith; and there indeed her soul was filled. She told me, in the evening of the day that she seemed to soar above every earthly object, and to taste the joys of Heaven. Light and love, peace and joy, filled her whole soul. But it was only for a few weeks that she enjoyed this thrice blessed state. Doubts and fears again disturbed her, and she would sometimes say, " I fear the *Lord* has left me." But faith bore her up under her trials, and she had some refreshing seasons. She was exemplary in private, as well as public duties. But the house of the Lord was the delight of her heart; for there she was nourished by the sincere milk of the word. She continued in fluctuations of hope and fear, sorrow and joy, until the last communion season which she ever attended. Returning home that morning, she complained of the coldness of her heart. " I have" said she, " received no sensible communication of strength or comfort at this sacrament. Yet some encouragement I may perhaps derive from the sermon I have heard. I remarked that the preacher said, ' The trees are still growing though you may not perceive their growth:' I hope it may be so with my soul. I feel as if I had need of great strength, to enable me to go through some particular trial." She was then indisposed, and had been so for some time. In a few days her disorder increased, and now she was enabled to see that she had not waited in vain on the Lord; but that he will ever make his grace sufficient for them that trust in him. All the graces of the Spirit were drawn into exercises, and so great was her confidence in the Lord, that she thought she should in his strength be able to undergo any trial he thought fit to call her to; and in this she was happily not mistaken, though her trials were great indeed, and probably far beyond what she anticipated. Her soul remained in peace and joy, whilst her body was agonized with pain, almost without intermission, and under every alarming symptom, she appeared composed: she often spoke with joy, of that dissolution which appeared fast approaching. " I feel" said she, " my disorder increasing; but I have not a desire to recover. I have had such views of the joys of heaven, and my heart is so filled with glorious anticipation, that I do indeed desire to be gone to be with Christ." Soon after this she was removed from her friend's house to her mother's. Although the distance was but one mile, the fatigue overcame her so much that she grew worse from that time, and her physician pronounced her case beyond medical aid. This deeply affected her friends; but, leaning on the arms of everlasting love, *she* feared no evil. She frequently repeated the seventeenth psalm, and the thirtieth hymn of the second book of Watts's version, and many others which she thought applicable to her situation. In this way she lay for some weeks; always patient and composed, and her countenance was often illuminated with a heavenly joy, as though she beheld the glory of the Lord. At length her disorder assumed a different appearance. She became drowsy, and slept away those hours she had before employed in prayer and praise. Her soul soon began to feel the effect of this change: her lively views were in some measure veiled, and some doubts arose in her mind, that rendered her unhappy. She felt a great desire to see one of her pastors, and after he had visited her was much composed. This was on Saturday morning: her pains now became so excruciating, that it was thought she could not survive that night. When the spasms intermitted, she would exclaim, " Oh! when shall I be with my Jesus! A few more struggles, and I shall be with him, and be at peace." The next morning being sabbath morning, as the sun arose " O" said she, " I thought I should have spent this day with my dear Redeemer: I thought I should have been where the sun never sets: O! how long shall I be in this vale of tears! Well, I will not be impatient: the Lord's will is the best." She then turned round to her friend, and exhorted her to be faithful to the Lord.

"You see," said she, "he has brought *me* thus far on my journey, and he will never leave *you*. I lament over many of my friends, that they are not more in earnest in the cause they have engaged in; that they are not more humble: O could they see what now I have a view of! I see what my Saviour has done for his people." His sufferings, compassion, and love were her constant theme. "Now my dear friend," said she, "I can speak with all the earnestness of my soul:

"My soul is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child,
Why should I longer fear?
In confidence I now draw nigh
And Father, Abba, Father cry."

In the afternoon a consulting physician was called in, who gave it as his opinion, that there was much to be hoped, if she could submit to an operation. This was a disappointment indeed; for she was now looking upon every hour as the last. About an hour before the physician came she was seized with a violent spasm; the family thought her dying, and surrounded her bed in the greatest grief. Her mother exhorted her to be strong in the Lord, and not to be distressed at leaving her friends. Her soul was filled with joy at the thought of going: she turned on her back, and with her hands clasped together, and her eyes fixed upwards, she exclaimed, "Come, Jesus, come; why do thy chariot wheels so long delay! Oh! when wilt thou come." She again repeated "O! could you see what I see!" It appeared as if she wanted words to express her feelings. This season continued an hour and a half, during which time her countenance appeared as if her soul experienced unutterable joy. She lay still a little while engaged in earnest prayer, and then exclaimed, "O! am I again disappointed? well, a little longer, and I shall be gone. The Lord's time is the best." When the physician at another time proposed an operation, she would not at first consent to have any thing done to prolong her life; but her friends representing it as her duty she yielded to their request; and the next Tuesday there were more than four quarts of water drawn from her side. The day before this operation, one of her pastors called. She was delighted to hear of it, and said, "He is come to assist me to bear my pain with more patience:" for she said when her pastors were with her, her pain seemed suspended; she was enabled to enjoy conversation and prayer, and that every grace seemed to have received new strength. One of her pastors who called to see her, told her he was going a short journey. She told him she never expected to see him in this world again. He then went to prayer, and prayed with great fervency; and while he prayed, the room seemed, both to her & to all her christian friends who were present, like a Bethel indeed; for the Lord surely was there, in the manifestation of his love.

After the operation before mentioned, she grew much better; she became able to sit up, and walked several times across the room; and as her strength increased, she began to have some desire to glorify God on the earth a little longer. But these favourable appearance soon vanished: another operation was performed, and all her bodily sufferings returned with double violence. No wonder that she should earnestly long to be released. Every morning she would exclaim, "O! do I see another day! O when shall these feet be stretched out for the last time! I am ready to fear the Lord has forgotten me: how much longer shall I suffer!" Her long illness brought on more violent spasms, so that her friends were deprived of the pleasure of seeing her: all company was excluded, and she was forbidden to speak much. But her chief comforters were not excluded: God and his grace were present with her; and in the conversation and prayers of her pastors she found a never-failing cordial. She requested one of them to administer the sacrament to her on the same day it was to be administered in the church to which she belonged; but, on conversing with him, she was satisfied with the reasons he gave for declining it; and cherished the sweet hope, which he presented to her, that she should participate in the blessed feast, in a spiritual sense, even though deprived of sitting at the sacred board: nor was she disappointed. She spoke little that morning: she wished all her powers to be engaged in sacred duties: she looked at the watch, to see if worship had begun, and was from that time engaged in solemn meditation and prayer. She had desired the prayers of the congregation, and particularly of her young friends. She again requested to know if the communion service had commenced. She was then at the table of our Lord in her spirit; her prayers were ascending with ours, both for herself and for us, and she communed sweetly with her Saviour and his people. In the afternoon she was composed, but not particularly exercised. In the evening all was still, but her soul expe-

rienced unutterable consolation. Then the prayers of the morning were answered, and she was comforted and animated by that faith she had been so blessed with. She did not sleep, but passed the night in sweet communion with her dear Redeemer. She told me, she had received as much as if she had been at the table: "O!" said she, "how good the Lord is to me! what a charming night I had: it has not been long, I have been so very happy." After this she underwent another operation. She bore it with the greatest fortitude. No complaint passed her lips; her mind was still in a most exalted state, though her sufferings were greater than can be conceived. She lived two weeks longer under these agonies, and became weak as an infant. All her cry was, "O! when will my Jesus come! O pray that the Lord may take me!" and other exclamations of this kind. At length it pleased God to call her to himself The morning of the day she died, her mother asked her if she was happy? She said, "*Yes;*" which was the last word she spoke, and she died in the evening, about five o'clock, without a sigh.

Thus has a faint sketch been given of the religious exercises and triumphant death of this amiable woman. It has been intended to state every thing concerning her rather below than above the truth. Her divine consolations were so great, and apparently so well-founded, that a judicious christian who visited her near her death, remarked, that it was difficult not to envy her in the midst of all the bodily agony which she endured. That agony, reader, religion did not prevent; neither, remember, can irreligion prevent it. It may be thine, it may be mine. But oh how desirable to have, under it, such inward joy as still to make our situation enviable, and which antedates heaven. How desirable, if we must suffer, to suffer so, that every pain shall only prepare us for a greater happiness in the hastening world of glory; for "these light afflictions which are but for a moment work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." True religion, alone, can confer on us this inestimable blessing. In vain may we wish with Balaam "to die the death of the righteous," and that our "last end may be like his," if we do not live the life which must precede such a death. Oh that youth, while they read these interesting narratives of the death of the young, might be solemnly impressed with the recollection that they too may die in youth, and be seriously engaged in preparing for a death of christian hope and triumph.

POETRY.

For the Assembly's Magazine.

MR. EDITOR,

HAVING lately met with the following little Greek hymn, in which the temper of a truly devout heart is shortly but admirably described, I send it for insertion in the magazine. A prose translation is subjoined, but I could wish that some of your correspondents, who possess a poetic turn, would put it into English verse.

Ὑμνῶ σε μάκαρ,
Καὶ διὰ φωνᾶς:
Ὑμνῶ σε μάκαρ,
Καὶ διὰ σιγᾶς.
Ὅσα γὰρ φωνᾶς
Τόσα καὶ σιγᾶς,
Αἰεὶ νοήσᾶς:
Πάτερ ἄγνωστε,
Πάτερ ἄρρητε.

"O blessed, blessed God! with my voice I praise thee; with silence also I praise thee; for voice and silence thou equally and always understandest; Father unsearchable, Father ineffable"!

On the Birth of a Child after the death of its Father. By a Lady.

LONG have the storms of sorrow press'd,
Long have the blasts of care,
Rooted enjoyment from my breast
And nurtured anguish there.
But now a dawn of brighter day
Breaks through the clouded skies;
Beneath its gently beaming ray,
Hope's tender blossoms rise.
Thy smiles, lov'd child! the gloom dispel,
And to my bosom press'd,
If vain regrets that bosom swell,
They sooth the pang to rest.
Ah! while maternal fondness glows,
Let all repinings cease;
Thou, the dear solace of my woes,
Shall crown my days with peace.

P.